

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, between line 1 and 2, please insert the following titles:

--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION--

On page 1, line 6, please amend the title as follows:

~~--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION~~ DESCRIPTION OF THE
RELATED ART--

On page 1, line 33, please amend the title as follows:

--~~OBJECT~~ SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

On page 2, line 1, please delete the title:

~~--BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, lines 7-20, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The coupling device includes a retaining member, given overall reference 22 that comprises a sleeve 23 with one end from which ~~there~~ extend axially-projecting tabs 24, each having a free end provided with an inwardly-projecting catch 25. Each catch 25 ~~prevents~~ includes a chamfered surface 26 facing away from the sleeve 23 and a radial surface 27 beside the sleeve. The tabs 24 are elastically deformable between a

gripping state in which the catches 25 define a through section of diameter smaller than the outside diameter of the annular bead 4 on the end 3 of the ducts 2, and a relief state in which catches 25 are spaced apart from one another so as to define a through section of diameter that is not less than the outside diameter of the annular bead 4.--